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AMBASSADOR DAN MOZENA

PRESS CONFERENCE

DHAKA, BANGLADESH

MAY 22, 2013

Ambassador Mozena: Good morning, everybody. I'm very impressed by Kelly's Bangla. I appreciate that. My dream had been to be able to do that too, but actually, that's not happening. History is in the making and you are part of that. What I'd like to do today is take a few minutes and just share my expectations, my vision of the upcoming Partnership Dialogue between America and Bangladesh. This will take place Sunday and Monday, this coming Sunday and Monday. It is the second Partnership Dialogue between America and Bangladesh. Some of you will remember when I arrived November 19, 2011, some of you were there. I remember Mainul was there. I shared my vision of having Secretary Clinton come and consummate a Partnership Dialogue Agreement to institutionalize the relationship between America and Bangladesh. Many of you remember that on May 5 last year Secretary Clinton came. She made an official visit to Bangladesh, and she and the Honorable Foreign Minister Dipu Moni signed an agreement that established the Partnership Dialogue. And you remember this? The Prime Minister stood right behind. So she's standing behind. It was all ladies up there ... and signed the Partnership Dialogue. Of course for me that was a wonderful moment.

The first Partnership Dialogue took place in September ... September 19 and 20 last year. That took place in Washington, DC. Now we're getting ready for the second one.

This one will build on that first one. You remember then Foreign Secretary Quayes went to Washington, and our side was headed by the number three person in the State Department, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs. That's the title. That's a goofy title, but it's the title. Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs. Her name is Wendy Sherman. She headed the U.S. side last September. Now she's coming to Dhaka, and she will head the U.S. delegation again.

She is not coming alone. My goodness, she's not coming alone. She has a most impressive delegation coming, and I'm really excited about it.

The Assistant Secretary of State for Economic Affairs is coming, Economic and Business Affairs. That's Jose Fernandez. That's a real big fish. I'm very excited about that.

Alyssa Ayres is coming. Many of you will remember Alyssa Ayres. She's the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia. So she's coming.

Another Deputy is coming from the Office of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. That's Karen Hanrahan. I think it's her first time here.

Kelly Clements, you might remember Kelly Clements from the Office of Population, Refugees and Migration. She's coming.

Bob Ichord is coming. He was just here a few weeks back. About six weeks ago, I guess. Bob Ichord. He's the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Energy Affairs. He's coming.

Then from the Pentagon is coming Brigadier General Malavet. He's the Deputy in Charge of South and Southeast Asia for the Pentagon.

That's a big, powerful and impressive delegation coming from Washington.

Press: How many?

Ambassador Mozena: I don't know. It must be ten or something. There are more. There are a bunch more. I didn't list them all.

The Bangladeshi side will be headed by Foreign Secretary Shahidul Haque.

That's the Partnership Dialogue composition. In addition ... and this is something brand new and something really, really exciting ...there is going to be a Private Sector Forum in parallel. So you have the Partnership Dialogue and then you have the Private Sector Forum. We have representatives of American business coming from America, coming from Delhi, Kolkata and Hong Kong. Then there will be local representatives of American business. Altogether, 40 or 50 American companies will participate in a three-day program.

The whole idea is just what you would think, promoting trade, promoting investment, just trying to help American companies understand better the opportunities and the challenges of doing business here.

But coming back to the Partnership Dialogue itself. This is, like I said, where Wendy Sherman and Shahidul Haque will be the heads of the respective delegations.

What is this all about? The purpose of the Partnership Dialogue is to assess from a strategic level, to assess our partnership. Is it what we want? How can we do it better? And to give the partnership strategic direction for the next year and beyond. That's the purpose. It's trying to take that 37,000 feet assessment of the relationship.

When I look ahead, I think the message, and I should underscore that when Wendy comes here, when Under Secretary Sherman comes here, she will be building on the Foreign Minister's visit to America, to Washington, just last week. On Friday, many of you followed, she had a long and productive and successful and cordial meeting with Secretary Kerry. It's the first time they met since he became Secretary of State. I'm very pleased about that.

That meeting, of course, is the result of the importance of this partnership from the American perspective. That is a message that Under Secretary Sherman will be underscoring here. She will be highlighting how robust this relationship is and how it's growing and how productive it is. And she will reaffirm that this relationship, this relationship is based on shared values.

Bangladesh and America share many values and we have many common goals. That convergence is the foundation for this partnership.

The Under Secretary will reaffirm that this relationship is strong and she is coming to make it stronger, to make it deeper, to make it broader.

Here's something you might not know about ...just to give a little bit of diversion and a little depth to what I'm saying. Do you know that President Obama earlier this week was talking about Bangladesh and American exports to Bangladesh. He went up to Baltimore, that's a city just north of Washington, DC, and he visited a factory. And in that factory he had his picture taken ... and you ought to see this picture ... with dredgers being built for export to Bangladesh. He made the comment that this shows the potential for partnership and engagement with developing countries like Bangladesh. It was very nice. If anybody needs that picture, you can get it from Kelly here.

In the Partnership Dialogue there will be four focus areas: development and governance, trade and investment, security cooperation, regional integration. The Dialogue will start off with these working groups, and then it will go into a plenary review. Let me take a minute and look at each of those four working groups.

On development and governance they will review President Obama's Strategic Initiatives on Health Care, on Food Security, Climate Change, Women's Empowerment. There will be discussion on governance issues, on the Rohingya refugee issues, civil society. I'm sure the Bangladesh side will want an update on the Millennium Challenge Account. So you can see, there's a lot to talk about in that particular group.

On trade and investment, as you would expect, there will be discussion about the tragedies of Rana Plaza and the Tazreen Fashions tragedy. There will be a good discussion on how to ensure that those tragedies are never repeated. There will be discussion on workers' rights to freely associate and organize ... and on their right to work in safe conditions. There will be all those discussions. There will be discussions on how ... out of these tragedies ... to find a way to make Bangladesh a preferred brand, the place where everybody wants to invest in the RMG, knitwear and household textile sectors, where everybody wants to come and buy. The buyers want to come. A place where consumers want to buy. My 92 year old mother, she'll go shopping and say, "ah, made in Bangladesh. Danny says that's good." I'm Danny. That's the preferred brand of my vision. So they'll talk about those things.

They'll talk about the steps that have been taken, that are being taken I should say, to achieve this goal. They'll talk about labor law reform and how is the best way to proceed on this. They'll

talk about fire safety standards, minimum standards for every factory, every factory. Not 50 percent -- 100 percent, 5,000 factories.

They'll talk about minimum factory structural soundness standards ... again, every factory.

They'll talk about prospects for a Better Work program. If it's launched, that would become the largest Better Work program in history. I'm sure the Bangladesh side will talk about duty-free/quota-free access, so I told Wendy that she can anticipate that. There will be discussion, I'm sure, about the GSP review process that's underway right now ... much discussion of renewable energy and things like that. I'm just sharing with you how those discussions will go.

On security, there will be discussion of the strength of the partnership with Bangladesh ... and its effectiveness in countering violent extremism, in countering terrorism. There will be a discussion of security assistance programs, peacekeeping operations. As you know, Bangladesh is number one or number two always in the whole world in contributing to peacekeeping operations. There will be discussion of disaster preparedness and things of that nature.

The fourth focus area relates to regional stability, connectivity. There will be much discussion in this exciting area, especially with Bangladesh's leadership in reaching out to India, to Nepal, Bhutan, especially China, and more recently Myanmar, Burma. That connectivity is good for the region. There will be discussion about the New Silk Road that connects to Central Asia. There will be discussion about the Indo-Pacific Economic Corridor that connects East.

If you think about the map you will see that Bangladesh is right in the middle of that, connecting the countries to the West. There sits Bangladesh, the biggest gift that God gave this country, right there in the perfect location. We come through Bangladesh, we turn left, you go to Kunming; you turn right, you go to Singapore ...that opens up tremendous opportunity for Bangladesh.

It's an opportunity that must be seized because there are alternatives. One of the alternatives I know that's under consideration is doing a sea link to the East from Chennai.

But best is Bangladesh. So, I hope that will in fact materialize. Then I mentioned before about the Private Sector Forum. That's a very big deal.

Out of all of this I think there will be some important announcements and maybe some things signed and things like that. I'm not entirely clear. But there will be, I hope, I'm just sharing with you what I hope. There will be announcements on health initiatives and climate change and food security, maybe on law enforcement ...different announcements.

What day is today, 21? 22? Tomorrow will be the transfer of what will become the largest ship in the Navy of Bangladesh; the United States Coast Guard cutter Jarvis has one more day of life, and then tomorrow at a big ceremony with all these vice admirals, with hundreds of stars up here, they will be there and the Stars and Stripes will come down and the Green and Red will go up on this ship. The ship will stay in California until October-ish or so as the refitting and training continues. I'm very pleased. They'll talk about that.

Sorry, I got carried away on that diversion. They'll talk about how to promote investment, things like that. They'll talk about renewable energy and announcements on those fronts.

While Under Secretary Sherman is here, she and I and Assistant Secretary Jose Fernandez, we hope to have a meeting with the Prime Minister, and we hope to have one with the Foreign Minister, and we hope to have a meeting with the leader of the opposition.

So it will be a busy time. I'm really excited about this. This is everything I had dreamt of coming to life.

I think that's enough from me, and you have a list.

Ms. McCarthy: I do. The first question will be from Kabir.

Kabir Bhuiyan: Good morning, Ambassador. First of all, let me compliment Kelly. Her Bengali is much better than my English is. So, it's quite amazing to see her speak Bengali in the fluent way.

Now, my question is about, regarding the dialogue you talked about. Would the U.S. side raise the issue of ongoing political violence and the issue of election time government during the Dialogue? And will it matter in terms of continuation of GSP facilities for Bangladeshi products? Will the Partnership Dialogue, the discussion in that Partnership Dialogue, have any impact in making the decision, or a decision has already been taken in terms of GSP? Thank you.

Ambassador Mozena: Questions relating to governance and political violence and the process for upcoming elections will, yes, be very much a part of this Partnership Dialogue. We are friends and friends talk to each other and that's exactly what will happen in the Partnership Dialogue.

One of the points that will come from our side is the opportunity cost of continued political stalemate because this is the time when investment should be coming to Bangladesh, because it's leaving China. It's flooding out of China. In fact every second we sit in this room it's walking out of China and it's going someplace. And I know for a fact it's not coming here right now. There are many other places fighting very hard to get that money, but it should come here, in my view. Political uncertainty makes it difficult for investment dollars to come here. So they'll be discussing that.

I'm sure they'll underscore the message that political violence is not, not, not acceptable. Not acceptable. We believe that all the players in the political process have the right to express their views and their opinions, but to do so in a peaceful manner. We believe it's the role of government to facilitate and provide the space needed so opposition and other entities can express their views peacefully. We believe it's a responsibility of the opposition parties to do so in a peaceful way.

Kabir Bhuiyan: Regarding GSP?

Ambassador Mozena: Sorry. I'm like Gerry Ford. You know, you know the rule, one question.

Kabir Bhuiyan: Sometimes I tend to break it.

Ambassador Mozena: I know. You break the rule and you embarrass me.

The second question, which I'd forgotten, relates to GSP. I think actually the GSP review process is probably too far along at this point. It's being evaluated right now.

As you know, the Honorable Foreign Minister herself was in Washington just a couple of days ago. And Foreign Secretary Shahidul was there, actually on a separate but parallel mission. So I think much was said, so that message has been conveyed from the Bangladeshi side.

Ms. McCarthy: I think the next question is from Mainul.

Mainul Alam: Thank you. One thing, my query is that, is the TICFA issue will determine the GSP, or is TICFA precondition to GSP continuation? Number one.

And the issue of the ongoing political process, still there is no hope, but you are, still there is no consensus or any dialogue between the two parties. So what's -- We see that you move, you talk

with different political leaders of different parties. What's your understanding in this regard, regarding election?

Ambassador Mozena: Mainul, you're pushing the envelope with two questions. Okay, now I've already forgotten the first one. TICFA.

Mainul Alam: TICFA.

Ambassador Mozena: The answer is, TICFA is TICFA. It's the Trade and Investment Cooperation Framework Agreement. It does only one thing. One thing. It establishes a forum -- America and Bangladesh -- that would meet once a year, maybe twice, but usually only once a year -- and identify the obstacles to increasing trade and investment and how to overcome those obstacles. So we have TICFAs with Sri Lanka, with India we have a Super TICFA, with Nepal we have -- they don't call it TICFA, they call it TIFA. There's one in Nepal, I don't know. We have 50, 45, of these. I did one in Angola. That's all it does.

Mainul Alam: It's 33 --

Ambassador Mozena: Is it 33? No, I think it's more than 40. Well, whatever it is. Anyway, I had one in Angola, and maybe one here someday. I don't know. That's all it is. It's not related to GSP. It is related to establishing this forum.

What I say to all my friends in Bangladesh is if this is good for Bangladesh to have this forum, then let's sign it. If it's not a good thing, then Bangladesh should never sign it. But that's not for me to judge. Somebody else will judge. We're ready to sign, but of course it takes two to sign, and that's fine.

What was your second question, Mainul?

Mainul Alam: Politics.

Ambassador Mozena: It's serious. I'm Gerry Ford.

Actually, you've heard me say this before and I'll say it again. You know I come from a farm, and I know you don't. But if you did, you would know farmers are always optimistic. A farmer is optimistic that this year the rains will be good. This year I'll have a good harvest. This year I'll make some money, unlike last year, unlike the year before. So by nature I am always an optimistic person because I'm a farmer. They just dress me up like this. And I clean my fingernails. [Laughter].

So I am optimistic because things are happening. People are talking to each other. People are trying to reach out to each other. These are little steps, but they're steps in the right direction. It will not be easy. But I'm hopeful that the parties will find a way sooner rather than later, find a way forward so that this country will have free, fair and credible elections.

Mainul Alam: -- farmer in India optimistic? [Laughter].

Ambassador Mozena: I tell you what -- Oh he's out of sequence.

Voice: That was your question. [Laughter].

Ambassador Mozena: Actually, I am very optimistic when it comes to cyclones, when it comes to tidal surges and when it comes to floods, because Bangladesh knows how to handle them. We saw that at Mahasan. Bangladesh's friends work to help Bangladesh. You see that America has built or rebuilt 550 cyclone shelters already. Right now, this year, we are building 130 more. But I'm not so optimistic on earthquakes. That's why we are working on earthquake preparedness. Just last week I opened a big multinational, 20 country exercise on earthquake preparedness. It was called Tempest Express 22. Earthquakes are a challenge ... a lot of work.

We've got a big exercise coming up in September to further enhance that.

Ms. McCarthy: Our next question is from Naznin from Janakantha.

Naznin Akhter: Good morning, Mr. Ambassador. I'm Naznin Akhter. I work for a Bengali newspaper Janakantha. Actually, early in this week you were at Parliamentary mass hearing, you were present there. I was there also.

Ambassador Mozena: Was that wonderful?

Naznin Akhter: Yes.

Ambassador Mozena: Yes, it was wonderful. I was so happy.

Naznin Akhter: But you made a comment, actually not a comment, you urged to organize, for labor to organize. That means trade union. And later on, our Jute Minister, we know from the source that he sent a letter to you and mentioning that you don't have right to say for labor issue to organize them, or for trade union, because in your country many of your states don't have trade union right. So, would you please make it clear to us? Or what is your comment on his comment? Thank you very much.

Ambassador Mozena: First of all, I make no comment on his comment because he should comment on his own comment. He knows what he was saying. I would not know. So you can contact him.

But the reference you made to states not having the right to have trade unions, that's inaccurate. The United States has 50 states and all 50 states have a right to trade unions. But that's a confusion I've heard before. I don't know why. But anyway, everyone in America has a right to form and join trade unions.

As to what I said at that wonderful hearing, and my goodness, I really enjoyed that. That is democracy. That is really democracy in action. I spent some hours there. It was time very well spent.

My comments are all on line and I encourage, if anyone is interested, to just go to the U.S. Embassy web site and there's a place that says speeches or something like that. It's real easy to find. And you'll see my comments.

But speaking more broadly, I mentioned in my opening remarks that the situation, the tragedies of Tazreen and Rana Plaza were horrible. Some of you I told, but not all of you, I told what my mother says. My mother always says the darkest clouds of life have silver linings. It's a philosophy of my life. Surely Tazreen Fashion fire and the Rana Plaza collapse were as dark as dark can be, but I think there's a silver lining there, and I think the silver lining is that these tragedies will energize a process that will create Bangladesh, Brand Bangladesh as a preferred brand.

What am I talking about? This is my vision of the silver lining. I am talking about out of this tragedy will come a process that will acknowledge and support and promote workers' rights to freely associate and organize and to work in safe conditions. And it's already happening. You see a labor law amendment that's being processed. It's still being worked on. Some changes are still being worked on, but that could be a big step in the right direction for enhancing the ability of workers to freely associate and to organize.

I see labor unions being registered. I think in the last five months, I think it's 23 --

Voice: Twenty-four.

Ambassador Mozena: Thank you, 24 have been registered. I think a year ago it was like one or zero, and before that one or zero. So that's a big step forward.

So I'm encouraged by that. I'm encouraged by the progress that Bangladesh is making to create an enabling environment for launching a Better Work program. I'm very encouraged by that, because that kind of program I think would have a big impact here.

In Cambodia a member of my staff helped set up the Better Work Program in Cambodia. It saved a whole industry. Now some business is leaving Bangladesh to go to Cambodia because of Better Work.

Anyway, I want Better Work to be here. So all of these initiatives to promote workers' rights to freely associate and organize, workers' rights to work in safe conditions, all of this progress is fully consistent and required by Bangladeshi law. It is required by Bangladesh's international commitments. So this is very good.

I'm very encouraged on that front.

Ms. McCarthy: Kishower?

Kishower Laila: Good morning. My name is Kishower Laila and I'm working at television channel Boishakhi.

My question is, you said you are hopeful about our political dialogue. But you know, the people of Bangladesh, they are not hopeful as far as I realized, because last 2006, we had also a dialogue, political dialogue, and which result was zero. So my question is, both parties saying about political dialogue and they can solve the situation on dialogue, on table, and one party saying that conditional dialogue and other one unconditional.

In this situation, do you have any, I mean, can you make any role like a third party role to arrange dialogue or invite a tea-party, like both party leaders? Do you any plan or can you make any role like this? Thank you.

Ambassador Mozena: I would point out that this is not 2006 and 2007. This is 2013, a very different circumstance. Bangladesh has the experience of 2006 and 2007, so one learns from experiences.

This is a most sophisticated country, most sophisticated country. They don't need me, they don't need America, they don't need anybody else from the outside to get involved in this process.

Only Bangladeshis can do this. And they will do this, in my view.

And when they've found a way forward, whatever it is, that leads to free and fair and credible elections, then outsiders like America, like the United Nations, like so many friends ...

Bangladesh has a long list of many friends ... everybody wants to help. And we will help.

We're already helping. But in terms of finding the way forward, only Bangladeshis can do that.

Ms. McCarthy: Shamim?

Shamim Ahmad: Thank you, Ambassador. In fact, all my questions have already been asked.

Ambassador Mozena: Oh, thank you, Shamim. [Laughter]. Who is next? [Laughter].

Shamim Ahmad: Now, I'd like to ask a question about your number 3 agenda — the security agenda of the Partnership Dialogue. In recent time, we have seen some movements, violent movement by extremist elements like Hefajat-e, Jamaat and Shibir, and in fact previously newspaper said one of the leaders confessed to the magistrate that they want to try to overthrow the government from Motijheel Shapla Chattar.

In view of this situation, ground situation, you're going to discuss the security countering violence, extremism and terrorism. So, my question, are you thinking or apprehending some kind of "uprise" of Islamic radicalism, radicals and like what we have seen in Afghanistan, or part of Pakistan, because many people are also scared of that Bangladesh maybe turning towards Taliban state or Afghanistan.

In this Partnership Dialogue, will you keep in consideration this aspect of Bangladesh transformation towards radicalism as we saw on the street? Thank you very much.

Ambassador Mozena: I don't know who those "many people" are whom Shamim is talking about, but I'm not one of them. The view that America has on this is to acknowledge the tremendous progress that Bangladesh has made in countering violent extremism and countering terrorism. Many of you, at least some of you, will remember a decade ago when there were questions asked about whether Bangladesh was the next Afghanistan. This was after all those bombings of 2005. I remember seeing that on a news magazine, I forget which one. But nobody asks that question now. I certainly don't ask that question now, because of the tremendous work that has been done by Bangladesh in countering such elements. So I applaud Bangladesh for the success of these efforts.

Ms. McCarthy: Raheed?

Raheed Ejaz: Once again I come to the third point on security cooperation. As you mentioned that some of the significant announcement or maybe some instrument will be announced after the Partnership Dialogue. So far, there are several propositions on, MOU on countering terrorism by the security forces of the two countries, as well as the acquisition of cross-service agreement.

My first point, whether these two particular issues will prominently come up during the discussion. And secondly, can you elaborate on some points in regards to Indo-Pacific corridor, whether you are discussing in an elaborate fashion? How we can proceed on those particular issues of connecting between New Silk Road in the Pacific corridor, something like that?

Ambassador Mozena: Two questions. One never knows what will be ready for signature or not, but a possibility would be an MOU on counter-terrorism. The other one you mentioned was cross-servicing treaty or agreement. No. There's nothing on that. In fact I only hear of that from you, you're the only one who asks, and nobody ever uses the word. I can't even remember the agreement. Other than you. But no, that is not there.

What was the second one?

Raheed Ejaz: The second one, connectivity.

Ambassador Mozena: Oh, the connectivity. We'll have good discussion on connectivity. This is one of President Obama's beliefs of promoting connectivity. And it can take so many different forms.

My personal interest in this is going down to Benapole. I've gone down twice. It's on the border with Petrapole, with India, on the way to Kolkata. I don't know how many of you have visited, but it's a happening place. Hundreds of trucks are moving back and forth. But it's a place that could be considerably more efficient. None of the warehousing is computerized, and there are massive warehouses with stuff all over the place. But that's a relatively easy fix. So we've come up with a way, some ideas to work with the government of Bangladesh on how to facilitate the processing. Because in my vision of Bangladesh as the next Asian Tiger, Benapole will become

a massive land port with thousands of trucks going back and forth. So it then needs to be much more efficient.

I'm sure they'll talk about that. I'm sure they'll talk about energy connectivity. They'll talk about hydropower potential in Bhutan. That makes so much sense to tap that energy and bring that to Bangladesh. Nepal is another source, but I think Bhutan would be easier.

I'm sure there will be a discussion about ports. Mongla port as an outlet for Bhutan and Nepal makes so much sense. I'm sure there will be discussion about the importance for Burma to finish (the land connection to the Asian Highway)-- I think there's about 40 miles of road missing. I've been on the Bangladeshi side. There's a very nice road that goes right up to the Burmese border and stops. And there's nothing on the other side. There's just a little chunk missing. If that chunk were built, then you would have a land connection that will go east. Then you go into Burma, like I said earlier, you turn left, a road already exists. It needs to be upgraded but it goes to Kunming. Or you turn right, and you go to Singapore ... these roads are being upgraded. This project's almost finished or soon will be finished, going by land all the way to Singapore. That's a big deal.

There will be discussion on all of that.

Ms. McCarthy: Shafiqul?

Shafiqul Alam: You spoke about the labor law reform that the government has undertaken, so do you think that they are on the right direction? And also we heard that some labor unions are complaining there are still some potential impediments. Do you think that more reforms should be there?

Ambassador Mozena: I have seen the text of the draft amendment. I know there are still some outstanding issues that need to be addressed. I'm sure they will be addressed. Because everybody wants to get this right, they will get it right. I'm very confident that the environment, the enabling environment, will be created that will allow the ILO and the IFC, the International Finance Corporation of World Bank, to launch what I said before, what will be the biggest Better Work Program in history.

Ms. McCarthy: Rabiul?

Rabiul Haque: [Question in Bangla] Translation: On May 8, Bangladeshi Ambassador (to the U.S.) Akramul Qader met with Robert Blake and Robert Blake said that the U.S. will give some good news on GSP if the labor law amendment is completed before Secretary John Kerry and Dipu Moni's meeting. The labor law went through an amendment in the Cabinet Meeting before John Kerry and Dipu Moni's meeting. Now, we're hearing that the GSP is not dependent on the labor law amendment, but on TICFA. So, what is the current position of the U.S.

Government about the GSP?

Ambassador Mozena: A lot of misunderstanding is possible. What Bob Blake was talking about is if the labor law amendment were fully satisfactory and if it had been put into effect through, for example, a presidential decree, then that would have made an impression on the review panel. But in fact that didn't happen.

The labor law text is still under some discussion and there was no presidential ordinance. The plan now is to finalize the amendment in some way, and then it would go to Parliament for enactment. I'm told that the timeline is like the end of June. That's all very good, but the GSP process will have finished by then.

Ms. McCarthy: Okay, Amir. Question three.

Amir Khasru: My question is, the Under Secretary will visit Delhi before Dhaka, so and you're talking about fighting terrorism in Bangladesh. So, is there any link that Under Secretary will talk all this with Delhi and come to Dhaka regarding extremism?

Ambassador Mozena: Well, I would guess that -- Look, I have no idea what she's doing in Delhi. [Laughter]. I would expect that she will talk about countering violent extremism and countering terrorism and a million other things. We have a big agenda with India like we have a big agenda here. So that's fine. But I don't see anything more than that. No.

I would just say one thing. Cooperation between Bangladesh and India for countering violent extremism and countering terrorism, that's very important. And we support that kind of cooperation, and there's been good cooperation. That has made a big difference.

Jahirul Alam: Ambassador, last year I was in Washington, D.C. during the first Partnership Dialogue, and I found, for U.S., the priority was security, counterterrorism, violent extremism, and with some other issues like investigation to the death of labor leader Aminul Islam, future of Grameen Bank, and among other issues, Bangladesh raised its qualification for Millennium Challenge account. So, is there any significant progress you have made or you noticed with these regards?

Ambassador Mozena: Yes. All of those issues were raised and I would expect that they would be raised again. On Aminul Islam, that investigation has now been turned over to CID. An award has been created for information leading to the apprehension of the suspects. The search for the suspects has been broadened in the region. The case is not resolved, but that may take time, and that's progress. That's encouraging.

On the Millennium Challenge Account, there's been much engagement to understand the process for that, to understand the need to ensure that Bangladesh is accurately reflected in the objective numerical scorings that are used to determine who qualifies for the Millennium Challenge Account. You know there are 20 different variables and it's all based on statistical information. And that's a good process, but only if the information is accurate. And Bangladesh has said some of this information was out of date. For example, girls education. That was out of date. It's not a U.S. government statistic -- These things come from other sources, the United Nations and people like that. I just gave you one little example of information that was out of date. So these things are being addressed. Those issues -- And Grameen Bank, the objective of the United States and the interest of the United States remain unchanged. Grameen is well known to the United States and our goal is that this remain an effective institution, bringing hope to, right now I think it has 8.3, 8.4 million borrowers. Almost all of them are women. So we'd like to see that sustained. We'd like to see the governance structure sustained because that's become a model all over the world. And we hope someday there will be a managing director who's acceptable to everybody.

When I was in America earlier this year, I visited a Grameen America Project to see the Grameen philosophy at work. And it's an amazing thing. There I was with about 25 women, all from the neighborhood, just like in a Grameen village. They brought food and I ate too much as they talked about their experiences. So the philosophy was able to go across 10,000 miles.

Ms. McCarthy: Mishu, I think you'll be the last question.

Mahfuzur Rahman Mishu: Ambassador, recently you met with Sayed Ashraful, Secretary General of the ruling party. You met also Begum Khaleda Zia some days ago, and you are talking about the dialogue and all the parties, especially BNP and Awami League, also told they are very much willing to dialogue, but it's not happened yet. What's your observation? What are the major obstacles on the way to dialogue?

Ambassador Mozena: Well in fact I wouldn't ascribe to your pessimistic conclusion. I think in fact the preliminary steps are happening ... very slowly. Dialogue is difficult in a circumstance like this because people aren't sure about the other side.

This will not be easy; it will not be fast. I can only hope that it will inch its way forward and then gain momentum, because I think it will yield a result -- I mean free, fair and credible elections -- that everybody wants. Everybody wants free, fair and credible elections. And a dialogue I think is probably the best way to achieve that result. So I'm very hopeful on that front.

With that, I thank everybody. Thank you for coming. I enjoyed the discussion.

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